

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 04505 01 OF 02 162139 Z

63/50

ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 IO-03 ACDA-10 GAC-01

MBFR-02 L-02 PRS-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 /079 W  
----- 083901

R 161703 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0568

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LONDON 04505

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ( O M I S S I O N P A R A 1 )

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, UK, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA AND FPDA

REF: (A) 66967; (B) CANBERRA 2065

1. WE SAW FITZHERBERT (FCO SOUTHWEST PACIFIC DEPT) FEBRUARY 13 TO SEEK FURTHER DETAILS OF AND UK REACTIONS TO AUSTRALIAN PLAN TO WITHDRAW BULK OF FORCES FROM FPDA. FCO HAD NOT RECEIVED REPORT OF SYKES' APRIL 10 MEETING WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN, AND ASKED US TO EXPLAIN WHAT U. S. KNEW OF MATTER. WE REVIEWED WHAT PRIME MINISTER LEE HAD TOLD US, INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOA OFFICIALS (REF B), AND CONTENT OF SYKES' APRIL 10 TALK WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY GREEN. WE WERE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN UK ESTIMATE OF HOW FIRM GOA'S WITHDRAWAL PLANS WERE, AND IN UK'S INTENTIONS IF THEY COULD NOT BE ALTERED.

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PAGE 02 LONDON 04505 01 OF 02 162139 Z

2. FITZHERBERT SAID AUSTRALIANS HAD MADE DEMARCHES IN FPDA CAPITALS ON APRIL 3. BRITISH RECEIVED "PIECE OF PAPER" (NOT RPT NOT A DIPLOMATIC NOTE) WHICH DISCUSSED CERTAIN "PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS" WHICH GOA WISHED TO BRING TO ATTENTION OF FPDA PARTNERS. FCO ASSUMES SAME PAPER DELIVERED IN SINGAPORE. PAPER LISTED WITHDRAWAL STEPS ALONG LINES LEE DESCRIBED TO US: (A) WITHDRAWAL OF AUSTRALIAN BATTALION AND ARTILLERY BRIGADE, PLUS SOME SUPPORT ELEMENTS, AROUND END 1973; (B) FURTHER WITHDRAWAL OF GROUND FORCES IN SINGAPORE LEAVING RESIDUAL FORCE OF ABOUT 150 BY END OF 1975; (C) POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL OF MIRAGE SQUADRONS FROM BUTTERFIELD IN 1976 GIVEN TUN ISMAIL'S CONCERN WITH OVERCROWDING. AUSTRALIAN PAPER SAID GOA WAS INFORMING PARTNERS OF THESE "PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS" AND HOPED TO HOLD FURTHER CONSULTATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE.

3. FCO'S INFORMATION IS THAT AT THE END OF MARCH HE AUSTRALIAN CABINET HAD DISCUSSED AND "TAKEN NOTE" OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS, AND IS TO REVIEW MATTER AFTER "CONSULTATIONS" COMPLETED. FCO IS STRONGLY INCLINED TO VIEW THAT WHITLAM'S MIND 90 PERCENT MADE UP AND THAT CABINET HAS REALLY APPROVED DECISIONS; PURPOSE OF "PLANNING CONSIDERATION" EUPHEMISM AND APRIL 13 DEMARCHE IS MERELY TO CONSTRUCT FACADE OF CONSULTATION BEFORE CABINET FINALLY RUBBER-STAMPS DECISION AND IT IS MADE PUBLIC. AUSTRALIANS IN PRESENTING THEIR PAPER STRESSED THAT THEY EXPECTED ALL OF THEIR FPDA PARTNERS TO ASSURE NO LEAKS. NEVERTHELESS GOA HAS HELD BRIEFINGS ON WITHDRAWAL PROPOSALS FOR FPDA COMMANDERS, AND BRITISH BELIEVE THERE IS STRONG PROBABILITY, PROBABLY FORESEEN BY GOA, THAT PROPOSALS WILL BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE BEFORE "CONSULTATIONS" COMPLETED.

4. WHITLAM WILL BEGIN OFFICIAL VISIT TO UK ON APRIL 20,  
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ADP000  
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PAGE 01 LONDON 04505 02 OF 02 161716 Z

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 IO-03 ACDA-10 GAC-01

MBFR-02 L-02 PRS-01 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 RSR-01 /079 W

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R 161703 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0569

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 04505

LIMDIS

AND BRITISH LEADERS INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MATTER AT LENGTH. FCO LEFT US IN NO DOUBT THAT HMG IS DISTURBED AND DISPLEASED NOT ONLY WITH GOA' S DECISION BUT WITH THE WAY IT HAS BEEN HANDLED; LORD CARRINGTON DESCRIBED AS " VERY MUCH LET DOWN" AT REVERSAL OF ASSURANCES HE WAS GIVEN SO RECENTLY. FCO IS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR ALTERING BASIC DECISION, BUT THINKS THERE MAY BE REMOTE CHANCE OF MODIFYING PROPOSALS TO PRESERVE SOME COLOR OF CONTINUED AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN INTEGRATED AIR DEFENSE AND NAVAL ASPECTS OF FPDA. FITZHERBERT EMPHASIZED THAT DIPLOMATIC APPROACHES OR DISCUSSION OUTSIDE OF FPDA NET WOULD PROBABLY PREJUDICE WHATEVER HOPES THERE MAY BE ALONG THESE LINES; PUBLIC LEAK WOULD CERTAINLY PLAY INTO WHITLAM' S HAND. HE THEREFORE ASKED THAT U. S. STAND ASIDE UNTIL RESULTS OF WHITLAM' S VISIT HERE ARE KNOWN. IT MIGHT WELL BE THAT U. S. COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE AT THAT POINT, BUT HE SAW LITTLE THAT WE COULD DO TO BE HELPFUL NOW.

5. FITZHERBERT WAS CATEGORICAL THAT HMG WOULD MAKE SECRET

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PAGE 02 LONDON 04505 02 OF 02 161716 Z

EVERY EFFORT TO CONTINUE ITS PARTICIPATION IN FPDA DESPITE AUSTRALIAN WITHDRAWAL, AND HAS DISCUSSED MATTER WITH GNZ WHO TOOK SIMILAR POSITION. POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE WILL HOWEVER BE MUCH HARDER TO OVERCOME THAN MILITARY LOSS.

SOHM

SECRET

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* LIMDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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KUALA LUMPUR  
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